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From: Kevin Elms [mailto:Kevin.Elms@mtolive.com]
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2010 2:12 PM
To: Mayor David Scapicchio
Cc: Bruce Gallagher; dfpr; fcarlo; Labow, Coleen; Perkins, Ray; Tobey, Phil; Greenbaum, Rob; Roman, Alex; John Mania; Lashway, Lisa; Pat Walsh
Subject: Mt. Olive Volunteer EMS

Mr. Mayor,

I was very disheartened to learn of your intentions to disband the volunteer EMS in town. Your lack of knowledge of how these organizations work leads me to believe you have not fully thought this through. I would like you to hear why I believe this is a mistake. Being a member of all volunteer emergency organizations in town at one time or another, I think I can give a unique perspective on what the consequences of this decision will have.

I do not believe this is what the majority of taxpayers want if provided all of the facts. I am not sure if there is time but it would be nice to know how many people in town who have little or no health coverage. Given these hard times, that could be many. Also, given the instability of health care in this country, who knows if ambulances will be covered under a new national health care plan that looks like it may pass Congress?

At a structure fire scene the volunteer EMS does rehabilitation for all firefighters, not just Mt. Olive firefighters. Mt. Olive volunteers have at least 2 ambulances on the scene and an EMS liaison at the command post. All of these things would be impossible with 1 or 2 ambulances in town. Adding to this, we have received EMS calls during a structure fire as it can last for hours. Volunteer EMS has done this in the past. This not withstanding larger incidents in town requiring multiple transports. This would also be impossible without the backing of the volunteers. Mutual aid agreements will require reciprocal help if asked. As I understand it, only Chester wants the our paid service in their town out of the 6 towns that surround us. So who is going to come mutual aid to our town? Why do you think the volunteers still respond during the daytime hours? This is because at peak times the paid service cannot service the entire town.

The volunteer EMS in town perform many more functions than EMS transportation. I realize Atlantic Ambulance stated they would do some of these functions but not all. For instance, I have been on incidents (not fires or accidents) that have required 6 or more people to remove a patient from their own home. The volunteers in town respond when someone is just not feeling right. Atlantic will do this too, for a fee. The volunteers provide generators to the needy when their power is out. The volunteers are out and about in force on a Saturday making the town residents feel safe knowing that there are for example 3 EMTs at a baseball game or 4 at the local car show, etc. There are many more functions the volunteer EMS performs in town. I simply cannot list them all.

You have been quoted in the newspaper the intentions of the town to acquire the Budd Lake First Aid and Rescue Squad building for the purpose of housing the paid ambulance service. I'd like to point out

that all 3 volunteer emergency services in town own their respective buildings. Therefore, the town would have to purchase them from its members if you would like to use it for the paid service. Have we ascertained the dollar amount of money this will cost the taxpayers?

Will the paid service take an active role in the Public Safety Committee? How do they fit into the Mt. Olive disaster recovery plan? I don't think that has been ascertained yet.

In closing, I'd like to tell you that volunteers are a dying breed but if we squash these unique volunteers in town, it will be very difficult to get them back. If 2-3 years down the road Atlantic and St. Clares decide to change the contract where the town is required to contribute monetarily, then we are at the mercy of these 2 available paid services.

Please reconsider your position given the points I have outlined for you.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kevin Elms
Firefighter/EMT
Flanders Fire and Rescue Squad

cc: Bruce Gallagher, EMS Captain, Flanders Fire and Rescue Squad Frank Carlo, EMS Captain, Budd Lake First Aid and Rescue Squad Doug Fenichel, Flanders Fire and Rescue Squad Phil Tobey, Council President Rob Greenbaum, Council Vice President Colleen Labow, Council Person John Mania, Council Person Ray Perkins, Council Person Alex Roman, Council Person Pat Walsh, Council Person Lisa Lashway, Township Clerk